

Eskom working on replacing failing infrastructure

Eskom has committed to replacing its ailing infrastructure in Gauteng after experiencing an increased number of "pole-mounted" transformers and mini-substations that fail due to network overload.



Source: Getty/Gallo

According to the state-owned entity, this is caused by meter bypassing, illegal connections, unauthorised operations, and vandalism of the electricity infrastructure.

To date, Eskom has successfully replaced and repaired 50% of the damaged electrical equipment in areas where communities have complied with the audit process across Gauteng.

High demand

While Eskom has a stable amount of critical material in stock, there is a risk of being unable to meet the “exponentially” high demand. This as lockdown has affected the production of electrical equipment, which has strained the industry.

“These are subsequent to the audit process, which includes assessing the severity of the damage on the network, removing illegal connections, disconnecting, and issuing fines to customers with contraventions that have to be paid in full before the equipment is replaced.”

Gauteng's senior maintenance and operations manager, Mashangu Xivambu, said they are working around the clock to replace and repair failed equipment with the resources available.

Community resistance

"However, we often are faced with community resistance and other challenges which delay our efforts such as violently assaulting and injuring our employees, chasing them out of the areas, illegally removing and operating on our infrastructure, and non-adherence to the audit process as is the case in Chiawelo," he said.

For instance, Eskom has replaced six of the seven problematic equipment in other parts of Chiawelo with one area remaining due to the lack of community cooperation until recently.

"The mini-substations will be replaced in the area subject to the availability of resources and material. We encourage communities to fully cooperate with us by allowing our employees to conduct their operations without interference," said Xivambu.

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